



Department of Justice

United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott
Eastern District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, April 28, 2008
Docket #: 1:07-cr-00150-AWI

CONTACT: Karen Escobar
PHONE: (559) 497-4000
www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae

BAKERSFIELD POT DISPENSARY OWNER SENT TO PRISON

FRESNO—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent-in-Charge Javier F. Peña announced today that WILLIAM EUGENE CONNELLY, 51, of Bakersfield, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Anthony W. Ishii to six months in prison, six months home detention, and three years supervised release for possessing marijuana with the intent to distribute from Seven Seas Compassionate Care Center, a “medical marijuana” dispensary located at 6403 Seven Seas Avenue, #A, in Bakersfield that CONNELLY owned. He also must register as a drug offender, wear an electronic alcohol monitoring device, participate in a program of mental health treatment, and participate in drug and alcohol testing.

The case is the product of an Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation conducted by the Bakersfield DEA Resident Office.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Karen Escobar, who prosecuted the case, CONNELLY pleaded guilty on March 3, 2008. As part of his guilty plea, CONNELLY admitted that on May 29, 2007, he possessed approximately 40 pounds of marijuana at his dispensary that he intended to distribute in violation of federal law. CONNELLY acquired the dispensary in June 2006—one year after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the federal prohibition on the medical use of marijuana—and made about \$10,000 a month from the sales of marijuana from his dispensary.

In sentencing CONNELLY to prison, Judge Ishii noted that CONNELLY has a criminal history, including four convictions for battery, a conviction for false information on a document, and four convictions for DUI. In addition, the Court noted that CONNELLY did not satisfactorily comply with conditions of pretrial release, first by testing positive for the presence of marijuana in his system and second by committing his fourth DUI offense and failing to report its commission to his Pretrial Services Officer.

#